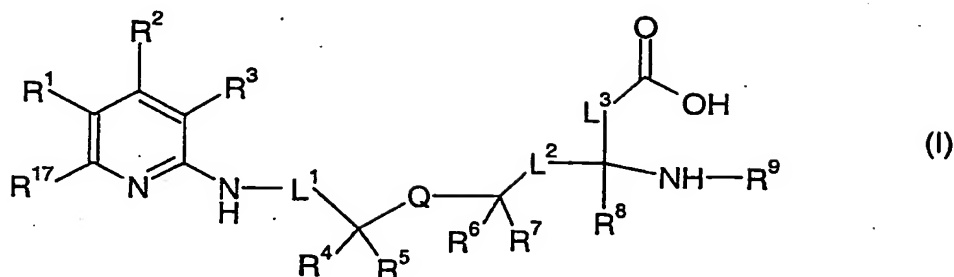


CLAIMS:

1. A compound of formula (I)



wherein

10 R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^{17} independently represent H, halogen, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, CN, MeS(O)_m or $\text{NR}^{10,11}$; said alkyl group being optionally further substituted by OH or one or more halogen atoms;

15 L^1 represents $\text{CR}^{12,13}$ wherein R^{12} and R^{13} independently represent H or C1 to 4 alkyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

20 L^2 represents a bond or $\text{CR}^{12,13}$ wherein R^{12} and R^{13} independently represent H or C1 to 4 alkyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

L^3 represents $-\text{CH}_2-$ or a bond;

25 R^4 , R^5 , R^6 and R^7 independently represent H, C1 to 6 alkyl, Ar^1 or $\text{Ar}^1-\text{C1 to 4 alkyl}$;

or R^4 and R^5 , or R^6 and R^7 , may be joined together such that the group CR^4R^5 or the group CR^6R^7 represents a C3 to 6 cycloalkyl ring;

5 Q represents O, $S(O)_n$ or NR^{16} ;

R^{16} represents H, C1 to 6 alkyl, C1 to 6 alkanoyl, C1 to 6 alkyl-SO₂-,
C1 to 6 alkyl-O-CO-, Ar^2 or Ar^2-CH_2- ;

10 Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently represents phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaromatic ring containing one to three heteroatoms independently selected from O, S and N; said phenyl or heteroaromatic ring being optionally substituted by one or more substituents independently selected from halogen, CN, CF₃, C1 to 3 alkyl, C1 to 3 alkoxy, hydroxy, C1 to 3 thioalkoxy or $NR^{14}R^{15}$;

15

m and n independently represent an integer 0, 1 or 2;

R^8 represents H or C1 to 4 alkyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

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R^9 represents H or C1 to 4 alkyl;

R^{10} and R^{11} independently represent H, C1 to 2 alkyl, C1 to 2 alkanoyl or C1 to 2 alkylsulfonyl;

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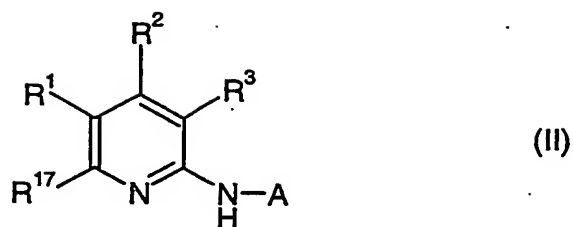
R^{14} and R^{15} independently represent H, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 2 alkyl-SO₂-, or C1 to 4 alkanoyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

30 and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

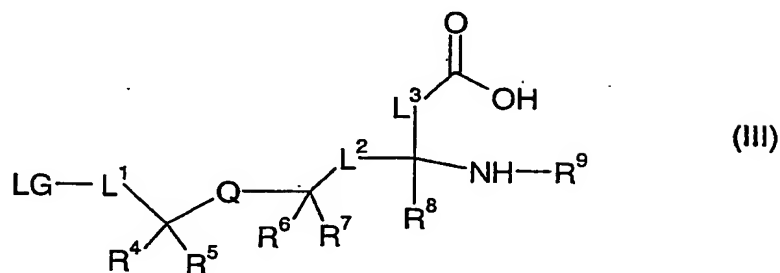
2. A compound according to Claim 1 wherein Q represents S.
- 5 3. A compound of formula (I), according to Claim 1, which is:
S-[2-[(4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)amino]ethyl]-L-cysteine;
S-[2-[(4-methoxy-2-pyridinyl)amino]ethyl]-L-cysteine;
S-[2-[(4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)amino]pentyl]-L-cysteine;
S-[2-[(4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)amino]propyl]-L-cysteine;
10 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.
4. A compound of formula (I), according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, for use as a medicament.
- 15 5. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant, diluent or carrier.
6. The use of a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a
20 pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial.
7. The use as claimed in Claim 6 wherein it is predominantly inducible nitric oxide synthase
25 that is inhibited.
8. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.
- 30 9. The use as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the disease is rheumatoid arthritis.

10. The use as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the disease is osteoarthritis.
11. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of pain.
12. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in combination with a COX-2 inhibitor, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.
13. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, to a person suffering from, or at increased risk of, such diseases or conditions.
14. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, inflammatory disease in a person suffering from, or at risk of, said disease, wherein the method comprises administering to the person a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.
15. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, enantiomer or racemate thereof, wherein the process [wherein variable groups are, unless otherwise specified, as defined in Claim 1] comprises:
- (a) reaction of a compound of formula (II)

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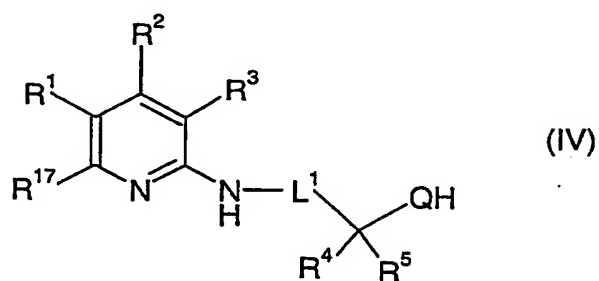


wherein A represents H, alkanoyl or carboxyalkanoyl,
with a compound of formula (III)

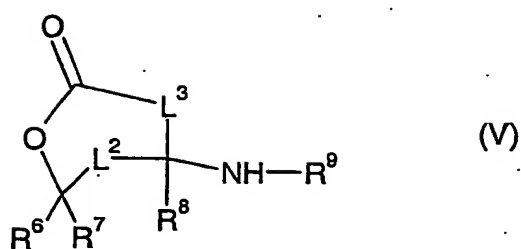


wherein LG represents a leaving group; or

(b) when Q represents S, reaction of a compound of formula (IV)



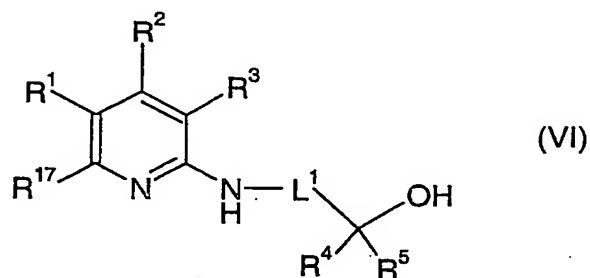
with a compound of formula (V)



or

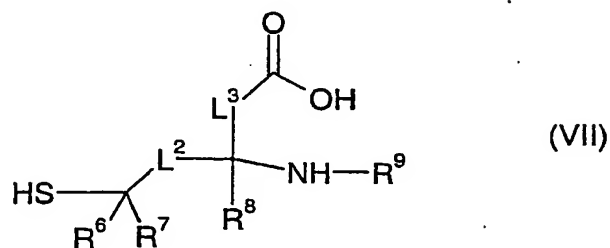
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(c) when Q represents S, reacting a compound of formula (VI)



with a compound of formula (VII)

10



under Mitsunobu conditions;

- 15 and where desired or necessary converting the resultant compound of formula (I), or another salt thereof, into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; or converting one compound of formula (I) into another compound of formula (I); and where desired converting the resultant compound of formula (I) into an optical isomer thereof.